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Don's 25% tariff on steel, aluminium import kicks in

The US increased tariffs on all steel and aluminium imports to 25% on Wednesday. President Donald Trump says new tariffs will help steel and aluminium makers in the US. However, economists warn they will raise the cost for US manufacturers that use these metals as raw materials. Canada, the largest supplier of steel and aluminium to the US, called it "completely unjustified" and has lined up $20.7 bn in retaliatory tariffs | P12

Retail inflation below 4% for 1st time in 6 months

At 3.61% in Feb, low CPI inflation raises hopes for another RBI rate cut

DIPAK MONDAL @ New Delhi

BRIGHTENING the prospects of another interest rate cut by the Reserve Bank of India next month, retail inflation eased to a seven-month low of 3.61% in February, driven by a sharp decline in food prices, government data released on Wednesday showed. Notably, consumer inflation has fallen below RBI's 4% target after a gap of six months, and is the lowest since July 2024. In January 2025, retail inflation was at 4.26%.

Meanwhile, another set of data showed the factory output, measured in terms of the Index of Industrial Production, grew 5% in January against 3.2% in December 2024, driven by the robust performance of the manufacturing sector.

The Consumer Food Price Index, which measures changes in retail prices of food items, fell to 3.75% in February from 5.97% in January on the back of a significant drop in prices of vegetables, eggs, meat, etc.

Rural inflation fell to 3.79% in February from 4.59% in January. Food inflation in rural regions also softened to 4.06% from 6.31%. Urban areas reported a similar trend, with headline inflation falling to 3.32% from 3.87%. Food inflation in cities declined to 3.20% from 5.53% in January.

"In coming months, we expect food inflation to remain soft," said Dipti Deshpande, principal economist, Crisil.

Core inflation (non-food, non-fuel inflation), on the other hand, crossed the 4% mark for the first time since November 2023, reaching 4.1% in February 2025. This was driven by surging gold and silver prices.

The low inflation print has also raised hopes for a rate cut. "CPI inflation print falling well below 4% has cemented the expectation of a back-to-back 25 bps rate cut in April 2025. This may be followed by another 25 bps repo rate cut in June 2025 or August 2025," said Aditi Nayar, chief economist, ICRA.

On state-wise inflation, Kerala topped the list of major states with the highest year-on-year inflation rate at 7.31% in February 2025, followed by Chhattisgarh (4.89%), Karnataka (4.49%), Bihar (4.47%), and Jammu & Kashmir (4.28%).

STARLINK APPEARS SET FOR INDIA ENTRY

RAILWAY MINISTER ASHWINI VAISHNAW ON WEDNESDAY POSTED A MESSAGE ON X WELCOMING ELON MUSK'S STARLINK TO INDIA

"Starlink, welcome to India! Will be useful for remote area railway projects," he posted on X

The minister later deleted the tweet

It came as SpaceX made separate deals with Mukesh Ambani's Jio Platforms and Sunil Mittal's Bharti Airtel to bring Starlink's high-speed internet service to India

Starlink is the world's largest low-earth-orbit (LEO) constellation operated by SpaceX

Starlink can help Bharti and Jio provide connectivity to previously underserved areas, especially areas currently with limited to no coverage

The deals come weeks after Prime Minister Narendra Modi met Musk, seen as very close to Donald Trump, in Washington | P13

EXPRESS READ

Siddu backs Stalin on delimitation row

Bengaluru: Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah extended his support to his Tamil Nadu counterpart MK Stalin's move to form a Joint Action Committee to oppose the Centre's proposed delimitation exercise. According to sources, Siddaramaiah is likely to depute a Congress leader to attend the March 22 meeting on delimitation in Chennai | P6

Will set up search panel for KPSC, says CM

Bengaluru: The state will set up a search committee to appoint members to the Karnataka Public Service Commission (KPSC), Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said on Wednesday. He also said the government will propose conducting KPSC examinations on par with UPSC. DUring a debate in the Assembly, the CM said there is a need to reform KPSC.

Autorickshaw drivers' unions demand fare hike

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

THOUGH most autorickshaw drivers never turn meters on before they start the ride and harass passengers by charging more despite the fixed fare, their unions have demanded a hike of Rs 10 in the base fare (minimum fare) for the first two km and an additional Rs 5 per km thereafter.

The Bengaluru City District Regional Transport Authority held a meeting on Wednesday to discuss auto fare revision. Over 20 autorickshaw drivers and owners' unions participated in the meeting attended by Soundarya KS, secretary, Transport Department, deputy commissioner of police (Traffic-East) Sahil Bagla, and officials from the Regional Transport Office (RTO) and the Department of Legal Metrology.

Adarsha Auto and Taxi Drivers' Union president M Manjunath told *TNIE* that the union members sought a hike in auto fares. Now, the minimum fare is Rs 30, with an additional charge of Rs 15 per km beyond two km. The unions demanded that the minimum fare be increased to Rs 40 with an additional charge of Rs 20 per km for distances exceeding two km.

Swabhimani Chalakara Sanghatanegala Okkoota (SCSO) president Tanveer Pasha said most of the unions wanted the minimum fare to be increased to Rs 40. The officials agreed to consider this proposal, but requested the unions to submit written requests. The requests will be submitted in two days.

He said many auto drivers operate through aggregators and mobile applications without using meters. He questioned the relevance of unions' demand for fare revisions if aggregators are allowed to fix their own auto fares. Officials failed in penalising those who violated the fare guidelines, he alleged.

'Sahakara Rangada Bhishma' Shri K.H. Patil Abhimani Balaga,
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and
'Sahakara Rangada Bhishma' Shri K.H. Patil Memorial Trust (R), Bengaluru.
Jointly organising
K.H. Patil Birth Centenary Celebration
and
Inauguration of K.H. Patil School of Law, Bengaluru
Date: 13.03.2025, Thursday | Time: 6.00 pm
Venue: Banquet Hall, Vidhana Soudha, Bengaluru
Gracious Presence
Shri Basavaraj S. Horatti
Hon'ble Chairman, Karnataka Legislative Council
Shri U.T. Khadar Fareed
Hon'ble Speaker, Karnataka Legislative Assembly
Inauguration of K.H. Patil School of Law
Hon'ble Justice Shri M.N. Venkatachalaiah
Former Chief Justice of India
Presided by
Dr. G. Parameshwara
Hon'ble Minister for Home
Govt. of Karnataka
Release of Logo
Dr. M. Veerappa Moily
Hon'ble Former Chief Minister and Former
Union Minister for Law & Parliament Affairs
Chief Guests
Shri K.J. George
Hon'ble Minister for Energy,
Govt. of Karnataka
Shri Ramalinga Reddy
Hon'ble Minister for Transport
and Muzrai, Govt. of Karnataka
Shri K.H. Muniyappa
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Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs,
Govt. of Karnataka
Shri R.V. Deshpande
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Science & Technology,
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Parliamentary Affairs and Tourism,
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